



STATE OF WASHINGTON
WASHINGTON STATE BOARD OF HEALTH
1102 SE Quince Street • PO Box 47990
Olympia, Washington 98504-7990

August 7, 2003

Ms. Mary Selecky
Secretary of Health
Washington Department of Health
1112 SE Quince
Olympia, WA 98504

Dear Secretary Selecky:

Thank you for the Department of Health's participation in the School Environmental Health Initiative sponsored by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. As Marcia Riggers mentioned in her July 9 presentation on the initiative, this is an important collaboration between public health and education agencies, necessary to build a system that responds to and prevents school environmental health concerns.

The Board looks forward to hearing more about this exciting initiative and other efforts, and requests that DOH report to the Board in January 2004 on the status of your agency's work regarding school environmental health.

As you know, the State Board of Health also has the goal of ensuring healthy and safe Washington schools. One of the Board's efforts has been to review Chapter 246-366 WAC, the primary and secondary school environmental health and safety rule the Board has authority to adopt (RCW 43.20.050). The Board also looked at other rules and issues that impact school environmental health, such as communication criteria for health-related school closures, plan review requirements, responsible parties during construction projects, and the frequency and scope of school health and safety inspections.

As a result of this rule review, the Board recommends that OSPI and DOH include in the next edition of the *Health and Safety Guide for K-12 Schools in Washington*:

- Communication criteria regarding health-related school closures and remediation actions
- Communication guidance and plans for crisis and routine communication between school district and local health jurisdiction staff, and students, parents, teachers, and community members.

The Board also recommends that OSPI and DOH convene a workgroup of representatives of local health jurisdictions, DOH, OSPI, school boards, school districts, administrators, facility

maintenance operators, architects, students, parents, teachers and other interested and effected parties to:

- Promote use of the *Health and Safety Guide for K-12 Schools* in Washington and other school environmental health best practices.
- Identify resources to improve local health jurisdiction and school staff expertise in improving school environmental health
- Identify funding mechanisms that encourage schools be designed, built, maintained, operated and inspected with the goal of improved environmental health.

Thank you for your leadership in this area that is central to the missions of both of our agencies, and is vital to the health and safety of Washington's children.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Linda Lake", with a stylized, flowing script.

Linda Lake, Chair
Washington State Board of Health

cc: State Board of Health Members
Terry Bergeson, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction
Marcia Riggers, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction
Vic Colman, Department of Health
Maryanne Guichard, Department of Health
Nancy Bernard, Department of Health